
North Carolina Law verses the Highway Patrol's Recommendation

North Carolina child passenger safety and seat belt laws are minimum standards and are based mostly on age. However, the Highway Patrol has some recommendations that are based on the weight and physical development of the child which go beyond the law and are the very best you can do to insure your child's safety.

The law says a rear-facing child safety seat must not be placed in the front seat if an air bag is active.

The Highway Patrol recommends that children ride rear-facing in the back seat for as long as possible as allowed by the weight limits of the safety seat being used. If a child must ride in the front seat, the Highway Patrol recommends that the air bag be disengaged.

The law says all children under age 16 must be buckled in the front or rear seat, and children under the age of 5 and less than 40 pounds must be properly secured in a child safety seat meeting federal standards in effect at the time of its manufacture.

The Highway Patrol recommends that children less than 20 pounds and under age 1 ride in a rear-facing child safety seat installed according to manufacturer instructions of both the child safety seat and the vehicle. Children over age 1 and who weigh at least 20 pounds can be turned around to face the front of the vehicle and should ride in a properly installed front-facing child safety seat until the child outgrows the seat, which is usually about 40 pounds.

Any child seat is legal as long as it meets federal standards in effect at the time of its manufacture, but it is not recommended to use a seat that:

- is older than 10 years,
 - has passed the manufacturer's expiration date, or
 - has been involved in a crash or collision.
-

The law says children age 5 or greater than 40 pounds in weight, may use a seatbelt.

The Highway Patrol recommends that children switch to a belt-positioning booster seat only when the full harness child safety seat is outgrown, usually about 40 pounds, and continue to ride in the booster seat until they are at least eight years old, unless they are at least 4'9" tall. Children should not be switched to a seat belt until the belt fits the child correctly and the child is mature enough to sit relatively still. Correct fit is achieved when the child's bottom is against the back of the seat, the knees bend at the edge of the seat cushion, the lap belt fits low and tight across the upper thighs, and the shoulder belt crosses the collar bone and center of the chest.

The law says seatbelts are required for occupants 16 and older only if they are seated in the front seat.

The Highway Patrol recommends that children under age 12 ride in the back seat, and EVERYONE, children and adults, ride properly restrained in all seating positions at all times.

The law says children under age 12 may not ride in the open bed or cargo area of a truck unless supervised by an adult.

The Highway Patrol recommends that no one ride in the open bed or cargo area of a truck.



For additional information, please contact the NHTSA hotline at: 1-888-DASH-2-DOT (1-888-327-4236)

UNC Highway Safety Research Center
1-800-672-4527

North Carolina Department of Crime Control & Public Safety
Public Affairs Office (919) 733-5027

50,000 copies of this public document printed at a cost of \$4295.00 or \$ 0.0859 per copy.



Place the attached sticker
on the back of your
child's safety seat.

This will give
emergency workers
vital information in case
your child's caregivers are
unconscious or unable
to speak in the event of
a crash or illness.

While most drivers will place children in child safety seats, 70 to 90 percent do so incorrectly. Through the BIBS program, we hope to reverse that trend. Please take the time to read this pamphlet and make sure your baby is safe and secure when in your car. Your baby's life is too precious to leave to chance.



Bryan E. Beatty, Secretary
N.C. Department of Crime Control & Public Safety